

This week, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its final “endangerment finding” on greenhouse gas emissions, setting the stage for the agency to regulate emissions under the Clean Air Act. This determination is in response to a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that the EPA could do so if it determines that they endanger public health and the environment. The EPA’s finding classifies carbon dioxide – a gas emitted with every breath we take – as a “pollutant” under the Clean Air Act, and will impose mandatory reductions on millions of businesses and entities across the country. The EPA’s latest bureaucratic assault on our economy is a political ploy to add momentum to the Copenhagen Climate Negotiations as the release of disturbing email messages from England’s Climatic Research Unit has brought into question the validity of the ‘science’ advocates have depended on to justify such overarching policy.

I believe that the EPA’s finding is a flawed policy decision of historic proportions. As Congress continues to debate damaging “cap and tax” legislation, this agency has taken it upon itself to sidestep the legislative process and use the administrative process to impose a rule that will burden American businesses and manufacturers with crippling regulation during a serious economic downturn. The Clean Air Act was clearly never intended to regulate emissions on such a scale. Congress wrote this law four decades ago to reduce the small levels of truly harmful pollutants. In developing this finding, the EPA also decided to do Congress’ job by “tailoring,” or essentially rewriting, the Clean Air Act to better position the EPA to regulate carbon dioxide emissions.

As we currently cope with unemployment levels not seen in a generation, the EPA’s action will cause the loss of 800,000 jobs annually, with some industries seeing losses exceeding 50%, while costing small businesses billions in compliance costs. This endangerment finding also comes on the heels of the Energy Information Administration’s announcement that U.S. emissions for 2008 decreased 2.2% as a result of high energy prices and the economic downturn. The EPA intends to continue this trend by imposing a regulatory recession on the American people. I am strongly supporting [legislation](#) to prohibit the EPA from regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. Furthermore, I have signed a [discharge petition](#) that would bring this legislation directly to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote. The discharge petition requires the signatures of at least 218 members of the House. I hope that Congress will exercise its power to stop the EPA’s runaway abuse of its authority.